



Legislative Platform – 2026

Fair Budgeting

1. Any state or federal funding reductions to counties should also reduce mandates to avoid shifting costs to property taxes. Funding reductions should be shared equitably across the state systems and regions.
2. Counties are key partners in implementing state programs and services. Any changes to county programs or funding should involve counties in the decision-making process to ensure effective outcomes.

Capital Investment

Dakota County supports:

1. State and federal funding for priority Dakota County projects:
 - a. County Road 50 safety and pedestrian improvements at Interstate 35
 - b. Lebanon Hills and Lake Byllesby campground buildings and beach house replacement
 - c. County Road 46 expansion from TH 3 to TH 52
2. State funding for projects within Dakota County:
 - a. TH 13/Nicollet intersection
 - b. TH 50 safety improvements east of TH 52
 - c. TH 77 northbound lane addition
 - d. I-494/Delaware Avenue/Argenta Trail improvements
 - e. TH 52/55 and County Road 42 improvements
3. A study related to an amateur sports complex in the southern Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
4. The Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails System capital funding request (with partial match from the Metropolitan Council).
5. Municipal water infrastructure improvement projects to address the following cities' drinking water contamination issues:
 - a. Apple Valley, PFAS
 - b. Burnsville, water treatment plan rehabilitation and infrastructure investments
 - c. Coates, nitrate and pesticides
 - d. Hastings, nitrate and PFAS
 - e. South St. Paul, PFAS

Environmental Protection

Dakota County supports:

1. A comprehensive plan by the legislature, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Board of Animal Health to slow the spread of chronic wasting disease.

Waste

1. Adequate state resources for the long-term care of existing landfills, including the return of diverted Closed Landfill Investment Fund (CLIF) revenue.

2. Full state funding to counties for waste diversion mandates by the state. This includes increased funding from the Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE).
3. State actions with funding to properly close the Freeway Landfill to protect public health and the environment and benefit the local community.
4. Maintaining Minnesota's existing waste management hierarchy that prioritizes waste management in the preferred order: waste and toxicity reduction, reuse, recycling and organics recovery/diversion, resource recovery and land disposal.
5. State-led coordinated market development efforts to recover materials from waste that prioritizes high-value uses of recovered materials, including for hard-to-recycle materials.
6. Coordinated state efforts to manage tree waste and ensure regional capacity to dispose of large quantities of wood waste from emerald ash borer infestation and tree diseases.
7. Maintaining support for federal and state extended producer responsibility laws and product stewardship approaches that support producer-led toxicity reduction, source reduction, reuse and recycling.

Water

1. Coordinated efforts among state agencies to develop updated state rules and guidelines to implement and oversee wastewater, graywater and combined rainwater/stormwater reuse systems.
2. Strengthen legislation to protect and improve the quality of groundwater and surface water in Minnesota, and identify and reduce contamination of nitrates, PFAS and other emerging contaminants of concern.
3. Return state aid for aquatic invasive species to original funding levels and establish base funding for land-based invasive species management.
4. State support of ongoing efforts to financially assist landowners with replacement of non-compliant septic systems for protection of essential groundwater resources. This includes increased funding for the Agriculture Best Management Practices programs or direct grant funds for septic system replacement.
5. Establishment of a long-term state program to assist public and private drinking water well owners with the mitigation treatment of contaminated well water that exceeds safe drinking water levels for geogenic (e.g., manganese and arsenic) and anthropogenic (e.g., nitrates, pesticides and PFAS) sources.
6. Support legislation or policies that require new large water users to identify impacts to regional groundwater capacity and availability for current and future needs.

Energy

1. State and federal policies and funding that support cost-effective, clean, renewable and sustainable energy.

Health and Human Services

Dakota County supports:

1. A child welfare system designed to keep children safe and with their families through adequate funding with the impact of providing manageable caseloads and keeping children in safe permanent housing arrangements.
2. Addressing an eligibility gap in the waiver system related to older adults with significant mental health needs.
3. An Intrastate Funding Formula (IFF) for distribution of federal Older Americans Act (OAA) resources that adequately funds the growing needs of older adults in the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
4. Flexibility for Elderly Waiver renewals for individuals in long-term care.
5. Interventions that address workforce challenges and resulting impacts in disability services including:

- a. Stabilizing home and community-based services staffing through targeted wage increases and other strategies (i.e. educational incentives, etc.).
 - b. Maximizing flexibility in self-directed programs to increase informal support options for people.
 - c. Simplifying paperwork and administrative requirements that don't add value, so direct support staff can focus on direct support.
 - d. Increasing availability of assistive technology to supplement paid caregivers.
- 6. Investments in modernizing the IT infrastructure at all levels for counties administering DHS and DCYF programs that will reduce the administrative burden at the state and county level and improve outcomes for clients. This should include additional oversight and accountability for modernization investments. The state should improve the human services systems counties rely on to administer mandated programs.
- 7. Policies and legislation that address cannabis and THC impacts, including:
 - a. Enhancing local control.
 - b. Reducing public health impacts.
 - c. Dedicating cannabis-related tax and fee revenues for public health prevention activities
 - d. Strengthening efforts to monitor product safety, conduct inspections, prevent access to minors, and enforce rules and regulations.
- 8. Setting the assessment adjustment for Medical Assistance to three years.
- 9. Simplification of state program rules and reporting requirements is paramount to successful modernization.
- 10. Stable, flexible state funding and public policy to improve and maintain healthy communities by supporting:
 - a. Addressing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
 - b. State funding for home and community-based care.
- 11. State policy and financing to assure a full range of community-based mental health services that promote mental health, prevent mental health problems, promote mental wellbeing, treat mental health conditions, and allow people with mental health conditions to thrive in the community.
- 12. Sustainable funding for community-based Family Resource Centers.
- 13. The elimination of health and human services-related cost shifts to counties.
 - a. Cost shifts coming from the federal government should be covered at the state level, specifically the added administration for SNAP and penalties for high error rates.
- 14. Additional temporary or long-term state funding to support new SNAP and Medicaid requirements.
- 15. The full funding of mental health crisis services, including:
 - a. 24/7 phone and mobile crisis response.
 - b. Crisis follow up and stabilization services, including embedded social workers with local law enforcement.
 - c. Direct appropriations to Dakota County until there is an increase in state funding.
- 16. The work of the Working Group on Youth Interventions in promoting best practices and improving the system of care.
- 17. Statewide Medical Assistance (MA) reimbursement for Collaborative Intensive Bridging Services (CIBS).

Housing and Economic Stability

Dakota County supports:

- 1. Ensuring the county receives its fair share of state housing funding to:
 - a. Fully fund emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness.
 - b. Enhance and expand state rental assistance programs and other homelessness prevention resources.

- c. Enhance and expand dependable streams of funding to support services that help people find and maintain housing.
 - d. Increase the number of affordable, accessible and available rental units throughout Dakota County.
 - e. Expand rapid re-housing resources to support households who lose their housing through an eviction.
- 2. Funding to expand the Housing Demonstration program.
 - 3. State funding and policy to strengthen the public safety net for those unable to work and to remove disincentives that discourage able-bodied people from achieving self-sufficiency.

Jobs and Economic Growth

Dakota County supports:

- 1. Investments to maintain and expand the Dakota County Workforce Mobility Program, creating better job opportunities in critical occupations.
- 2. State assistance to communities in reaching their workforce and economic development potential to enhance the quality of life for all Minnesotans.
- 3. Updates to policies within the Office of Broadband to expand eligible program costs to take advantage of advances in broadband technology.

Local Government

Dakota County supports:

- 1. Authority to create a service district, by adoption of a resolution, for the purpose of levying upon a portion of Dakota County to finance governmental services benefiting a service area within that county.
- 2. Efforts to adjust the Homestead Market Value Exclusion formula to support homeowner property tax relief by increasing the market value threshold and including an index to adjust annually with changing residential market values.
- 3. Maintained or increased appropriations for programs to enhance library services.
- 4. Policies that promote effective and efficient county government that provides quality services to meet the needs of Dakota County residents without infringing on the decision-making ability of local elected officials.
- 5. Revising eminent domain statutes to ensure equitable processes for determining landowner compensation and attorney fees.
- 6. The amendment of state statute 216G.05 to require that the permitting state agency, rather than county boards, be required to hold a public meeting regarding the construction or operation of a pipeline.
- 7. The authority delegated to democratically elected officials to make budget decisions for the unit of government for which they were duly elected.

Dakota County opposes:

- 1. Measures that would interfere with the ability of local governments to manage their budgets.

Parks, Greenways and Natural Resources Stewardship

Dakota County supports:

1. Authorization to issue administrative fines for park ordinance violations.
2. Increasing or maintaining the current allocations and funding distribution of Lottery in Lieu funding.
3. Increasing state funding for metropolitan parks operation and maintenance, including adding dedicated funding for the maintenance of restored acres within the park system.
4. Increasing the Park and Trail Legacy funding share to the Metropolitan Regional Park System.
5. Sustainable and balanced management of the state's environmental and natural resources through effective enhancement of local, state and federal governance.
6. The Metropolitan Council's request from the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund to acquire private inholdings within regional parks and greenways.
7. Authorization to acquire and own land for conservation purposes.
8. Additional state regulations on use of e-bikes and other electric and motorized equipment for speed, equipment classification and general operation on shared-use trails within the Regional Parks and Trails System.

Public Safety and Corrections

Dakota County supports:

1. Expanded, indexed and sustainable funding levels for community supervision of people in the corrections system.
2. Full funding of the research-driven community supervision funding formula in state statute to ensure effective implementation of these critical policy reforms continue after the sunset of supervision fees in 2029.
3. Programs and policies that promote safe communities through effective prevention, education, supervision and treatment.
4. State funding for the recruitment, retention and training of law enforcement officers.
5. The state fully funding the costs for continued health insurance costs for public safety officers disabled in the line of duty under Minn. Stat. § 299A.465.

State Government

Dakota County supports:

1. Full funding of local costs for or relaxation of state mandates.
2. Reformation of the Metropolitan Council governance structure to increase accountability to their regional constituency.

Transportation

Dakota County supports:

1. A statewide, integrated, multi-modal transportation system that keeps Minnesota competitive in a global marketplace with long-term sustainable funding to ensure safe systems that efficiently move people and goods.
2. Allocation of new state funds for state-mandated greenhouse gas mitigation efforts, and the expansion of allowable greenhouse gas mitigation strategies to include credits for natural resource improvements and green energy.
3. Transit development that better serves the interests of suburban counties, such as east-west oriented service since many transitways in Dakota County are focused on north-south travel to Minnesota and St. Paul. Current Met Council transit planning does not meet the needs of Dakota County residents and commuters.

Highways and Bridges

1. Issuing general obligation bonds for the Local Road Improvement, Local Bridge Replacement Bonding, and Local Road Wetland Replacement programs.
2. Issuing trunk highway bonds contingent upon increased long-term funding.
3. Maintaining the current distribution of the Motor Vehicle Lease Sales Tax.
4. Prohibiting the diversion of Transportation Advancement Account funds from counties to the Metropolitan Council.

Rail

1. Efforts to encourage railroads to work with local governments on opportunities to improve safe crossings near and along rail corridors.
2. State and local acquisition of rail corridors that are currently under- or un-utilized to improve non-motorized transportation systems.

Federal

Dakota County supports:

1. Efforts to encourage railroads to work with local governments on opportunities to improve safe crossings near and along rail corridors.
2. Efforts to support state and local acquisition of rail corridors that are currently under- or un-utilized to improve non-motorized transportation systems.
3. Ensuring federal approval as necessary of human services administrative waivers passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2021.
4. Federal funding to support improvement of the Interstate 35 Bridge/County Road 50 interchange.
5. The amendment of the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy in the Social Security Act, allowing pre-trial detainees to access Medicaid services while awaiting trial and in the month prior to release from incarceration. Doing so will support appropriate supports for mental health and substance use disorder treatment that will increase health and decrease recidivism.

Other Organizations

In addition to the positions contained in this platform, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners generally supports the legislative recommendations of the local units of government within the county and organizations in which it holds membership, including, but not limited to:

- National Association of Counties (NACo) and its associated professional organizations.
- Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and its associated professional organizations.
- Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA) and its associated professional organizations.

The county board may choose to take a different position on individual items within the platforms of these and other organizations whose platforms they generally support. The county board may also consider additional positions in response to issues that emerge during the legislative session.